

CENTRAL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

**Tuesday, January 16, 2018**  
**Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue**  
**Fort Smith, Arkansas**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

Meeting Minutes

The Fort Smith Central Business Improvement District Commission's regular meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 in the 7<sup>th</sup> floor board room of the Area Agency on Aging building, 524 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas. The meeting was moved to a room on the third floor.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Richard Griffin, Chairperson, at 9:32 a.m. and a quorum was noted present. Also in attendance were commissioners Phil White, Lee Ann Vick, Steve Clark, Bill Hanna, Sam Sicard, Rodney Ghan and Jeff Pryor. Others in attendance included Sherri Gard, Brenda Andrews, Doug Reinert and Jeff Dingman of the City of Fort Smith.

Mr. Ghan moved approval of the minutes of the November 21, 2017 regular meeting. Mr. Clark seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The commissioners considered the Treasurer's report for the months of November and December 2017, such documents being previously provided by Mr. Sicard for the commissioners' review. As of December 31, 2017, the Total Cash-on-Hand for the CBID amounted to \$89,107.92. Restricted funds comprise \$5,439.90 of the total. The total cash net of restricted funds amounted to \$83,668.02. Mr. White moved approval of the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Pryor seconded and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

The Commission reviewed the Neighborhood Services report, CBID Business License Report, and Open Permit reports regarding activity in the CBID through the month of December. There were no questions.

Sherri Gard, City Clerk for the City of Fort Smith, administered the Oath of Office of the CBID Commissioners. Each commissioner was provided the section of the Fort Smith Municipal Code and the Arkansas statute describing and outlining the duties, responsibilities, and authority of the commission, as well as a copy of the 18<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act Handbook, October, 2017.

Doug Reinert, Director of Parks & Recreation provided an update on projects. Notably, the department staff is busy taking down and storing the various Christmas light displays. The Greg Smith River Trail Phase III project has reached Fort Smith Park and is expected to be completed by March 4. The department is ready to start the design of Phase II of the improvements at the 51-acre site on Riverfront Drive, still challenged with establishing water service. The Fort Smith Park fishing pavilion, playground and other improvements are progressing. The idea for a Downtown Dog Park, in addition to the dog park planned for Fort Smith Park, is gaining more support, provided it can be done on property the city owns and funding for the fencing and various amenities can be secured for that purpose. The department staff plans to ready the splash pads for the season in March, and will open them up as soon as it is warm enough to do so. Plans are progressing for the construction of the

skate park and pump track downtown on the riverfront, the resolution approving the city's purchase of the property from the US Marshals Museum is on the Board of Director's agenda this evening.

Mr. John McIntosh, representing 64.6 Downtown, presented an application for a conditional use permit to allow a food truck court at Garrison Commons, 913-915 Garrison Avenue. The pocket park on private property currently has a spot for one food truck, but according to city ordinance, allowing more than one food truck constitutes a food truck court, thereby requiring a conditional use permit. The CBID must render its recommendation to the city's Planning Commission and Board of Directors. 64.6 Downtown showed a site plan whereby they would have spaces for up to three food trucks on the property in order to increase foot traffic to the park, and the vendors have been selected. Mr. Hanna moved that the CBID recommend approval of the application for conditional use permit. Mr. Ghan seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Griffin expressed appreciation for Mr. White and the commissioners carrying on in his recent meeting absences. Leading into the discussion of identifying priorities and projects for the CBID Commission, Mr. Griffin noted that 64.6 Downtown is leading an initiative to secure funding for a full-time Executive Director for the organization, a primary focus of which will be the implementation and tracking of initiatives outlined in the Propelling Downtown Forward plan as adopted by the sponsoring entities and the City of Fort Smith. Mitch Minnick and Talicia Richardson, speaking on behalf of 64.6 Downtown, indicated that they have a goal of securing pledges to fund \$125,000 per year in full-time salary, benefits, and operating expenses for such an employee for a minimum of three years. The listing for the open position has already been made public. One three-year pledge of \$25,000 per year has been secured, and they are reaching out to other private entities for funding as well. Mr. White asked the CBID to consider using its funds to pledge to the effort. Mr. Sicard noted that while the CBID's funds have been depleted by recent project commitments, there is an annual net revenue income from the lease of the Blue Lion facility to UAFS of about \$6,000. After discussion, which included a statement that such an expense would be a reasonable use of a general assessment on properties in the CBID, Ms. Vick moved that the CBID pledge \$6,000 per year for a three-year period toward the personnel and operating expenses of a 64.6 Downtown Executive Director, upon the hiring of said person. Mr. Pryor seconded. With Mr. Sicard, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Ghan abstaining due to their service on the 64.6 Downtown board of directors, the motion carried by a vote of five in favor, zero against, and three abstentions.

Mr. Griffin encouraged further discussion on prospective projects or focus items for the CBID Commission, including items such as Compass Park amenities, potential closure of portions of North A Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, two-way traffic on North A & B Streets, Farmers Market amenities, lighting the Garrison Avenue bridge, a 3-way stop sign at city hall, expanding the CBID boundaries up Riverfront Drive, streetscape for Riverfront Drive, assessment of CBID properties for operating & improvement funds, truck traffic/transportation planning, and perhaps a recommendation to the city on the River Valley Sports Complex. After much discussion on these various items, Mr. Sicard suggested that each commissioner give a fresh read of the Propelling Downtown Forward plan and devise a short list of priorities on which they believe the CBID should focus, and then have the discussion at the next meeting. The commission agreed to that course of action.

Mr. Griffin mentioned that the city's Board of Directors would be meeting this evening, and one item on the agenda is consideration of an ordinance to increase parking meter rates and fines. Mr. Griffin asked if any specific message from the CBID should be delivered. Mr. Sicard suggested that the city be encouraged to allocate any excess revenues from parking, over and above operating expenses and parking improvements, be used to improve the downtown district.

Lastly, Mr. Griffin expressed his dismay at the approved paint color of the renovated storefront at 504-506 Garrison. City staff has determined that the color used was indeed the color approved by the CBID. Mr. Griffin asked the commissioners to remember to be stewards of the downtown district's historic designation. He also suggested that the CBID be very specific as to what is approved in the future. Mr. White noted that there are holes in the façade of the building where bricks are missing. Ms. Andrews indicated that the property manager has been notified, and has indicated that parts have been ordered to correct.

The next meeting of the CBID Commission is scheduled for February 20, 2018. There being no additional business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Dingman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Jeff Dingman  
Deputy City Administrator